4: Lorimer L-3 (1920-4; 1934-8) 1935 AV7 Burusho AV7

No. VII.

Shon Guktir's Prophecy.

They say that in early times Shon Guktir, the Bitan, had made a prophecy. They say he had said as follows:

"After some years there will appear a handful of fair-complexioned men wearing short coats. They will do great justice and Hunza will become very prosperous. These fair folk will go where there are no roads. They will construct iron bridges. Moreover in the place of privies there will be stables. In the place of stables there will be privies." They say he said: "In those latter days the man who should hold his peace will speak, and the man who should speak will hold his peace."

That is all: the story is this much.

The last two sentences indicate changes in customs and the social system. I do not understand the exact implication of the confusion between stables and privies; but *yawa*, I think, means a man who has a right to speak in public assemblies, i. e. a person of social standing, while *oqwas* is the humbler individual who is not expected to air his opinions in the presence of his betters.

A note elsewhere says that Shon Guktir prophesied that Hunza would be conquered by people wearing "topees" (sun-helmets, hats) and good clothing.

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4 AV3 Dard AV3
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CHAPTER VII.

HABITS AND CUSTOMS.

D 178 771 NOTWITHSTANDING original tribal differences, the Shin rule in Gilgit and the surrounding valleys practically welded both conquerors and conquered into one people, distinguished only by caste divisions; and, though Mahommedanism has in some instances modified and in others abolished old customs, many of great interest still remain. Many of these, though originating in religious rites and beliefs, have now lost all connection with them in the minds of those who still practise them. It is difficult, almost impossible, now to distinguish between those which were introduced by the Shins, and those which were adopted by them from the original inhabitants; but fairly correct conjectures concerning the origin of some of them may be formed. Hunza is the B [178] country least affected by external influences, and in which the [177] laxest form of Mahommedanism now exists, but there is scarcely any custom or observance maintained there which has not its counterpart still existing, or which till lately existed in the neighbouring valleys. In Chitral and some of the valleys to the westward, many customs seem to have partly disappeared. This may, not improbably, be due to the inhabitants having been earlier converts to Islam, or more exposed to external influences. In the valleys to the southward, like Chilas and Darel, the want of a single ruler and the stricter tenets of Soonnee Mahommedanism have contributed to cause many old customs and festivals to fall into disuse. In spite, however, of local differences, enough remains to show that a strong bond of kinship exists between all the Dard and Ghalchah tribes.

D 142 147 In appearance the men are light, active figures, averaging from 5 feet 5 inches to 5 feet 8 inches in height. Though well made, they are not, as a rule, remarkable for muscular development, presenting in this respect a marked contrast to the Tartar races. Notwithstanding their hardy, simple lives, they seem unequal to any prolonged physical effort. In travelling and shooting I have constantly found them knock up before

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It is also a matter of accepted tradition in Gilgit, Gor, Hunza, and Nager, that suttee was formerly practised. The dead man, with his finest clothes and his weapons girded on him was placed on the pyre, and as the fire burnt up, the woman, arrayed in her jewellery and her richest clothes, leaped into the flames.

The burning of the dead ceased to be practised more than sixty years ago. One or two old men have told me that they could remember hearing it mentioned, as a not uncommon occurrence, in their youth, but none could recollect having witnessed any actual instance. So lately as in 1877, a very old man in Darel scandalised his neighbours by calling his sons to him on his death bed, and after having his arms and valuables brought to him, desiring to be burnt with them when dead. His wish, however, was not carried out. He and a man of Gor, who died twenty years ago, are known to have always refused to be circumcised, or to call themselves Mahommedans. They were probably the very last Hindoos in Dangaristan. Suttee was abolished earlier, and has certainly not been practised in Dangaristan for the last hundred years.

D 771 171

It is to be remarked that none of these customs, which savour so strongly of modern Hindooism, are to be found, either as now existing or as resting on former tradition, in any of the valleys to which the Shin rule did not extend; nor is the term Dangarik applied in any cases except those mentioned. The difference between some types of Hindooism and Buddhism is not necessarily very great, but the existence of customs among them, not shared by their neighbours, the establishment of a caste system, the use of the title of Ra for their rulers, and the common suffix of *Sing* to their own names, with the frequent use of Sanscrit terms, show that considerable differences exist between the Shins and their neighbours of the Swat, Punjkorah, and Chitral Valleys, with whose language their own has so much in common.

D 778 782

In spite of the more severe type of Mahommedanism which prevails, and which gathers strength year by year, idolatrous customs still survive. In every village in which Shins are in the majority, there is a large stone, which is still more or less the object of reverence. Each village has its own name for this stone, but an oath taken or an engagement made over it, is often held more binding than where the Koran is used. In several villages goats are still annually

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Burushi AV7

D 771 174 778 fication. It plays a conspicuous part in the incantations of the Dainyals, and on a great man entering a Shin village a pan of burning Chili branches is waved before him. On certain occasions both men and women saturate themselves with the smoke, which is of a particularly pungent nature.

D 171 779 B 171 178 The custom of Chili worship does not appear to have penetrated to Hunza or Nager, nor is any trace of it to be found in the Oxus Valley, in Chitral, or among the tribes of the Swat Valley; but among the Siah-Posh it seems to exist in almost the same form as it did among the Shins. Chili wood, or Padam, is still taken down to the Punjab to be used in Hindoo ceremonials. According to Colonel Prejevalski, the same tree is also held sacred by the Mongols and Tangutans, who burn the branches for incense during prayer time. At Hemis Shukpa, within 20 miles of Leh, a few trees of great age exist, and are held in much veneration by the Tartars of the village, though the tree is not generally an object of Tartar respect.[1] It may be that the feeling of veneration was imbibed from the Shins, whose influence must have extended nearly to Leh. It is still usual in Gilgit to sprinkle goat's blood on a tree of any kind before cutting it down.

D 771 171 B 771 171 The religion of the whole country is now some form of Mahommedanism, and in the immense knot of mountains of which Yassin forms the centre, three different types of the same religion have met, and are now striving for the mastery. From the south, Soonnee Moollahs have carried their tenets up the different valleys with more or less success. From the eastward a current of Shiah doctrines has set in from Iskardo; and from the westward the curious Maulai, or Muglee,[2] tenets have found their way up the Oxus Valley. It is to be noticed that the subversion of Hindooism by Mahommedanism in the remoter valleys seems to have been extremely gradual, and to have been more owing to gradual conversion than to persecution.

D 771 173 B 771 173 The genealogical tables of the present ruling families of Hunza, Nager, and Gilgit, enable a fair idea to be formed of the date of the introduction of Islam into the country. Tradition records the death of the Gilgit Ra with the non-Mussulman name of Shiri Buddutt,[3] at the hands of a stranger bearing the Mussulman name of Azru, or Azor, from whom the present Ra of Gilgit, and the Thums of Hunza and Nager, trace

[1] Henderson's *Lahore to Yarkund*, page 51.
[2] The common uneducated pronunciation.
[3] The meaning of the name is perhaps "Given by Sri Buddha."—*Sri Buddha Datta.*